quo.

His Prime Minister, Hafizullah Amin, subsequently ousted President Nur Muhammad Taraki in September 1979. President Amin had previously been a PhD. candidate at Columbia University as well as a principle in one of the boarding high schools in Kabul. The Amin regime executed and imprisoned intellectuals and technocrats from all over the political spectrum such as the royalists, religious elements, and rival leftist groups of society. He did not hesitate to go after his own party members such as President Taraki or his sympathizers.

Interestingly, Amin had declared a jihad on illiteracy while leftist were plotting his overthrow and the mujahidin renewed their call to jihad (holy war) started in 1973 against the state. Neither the leftists nor mujahidin were able to overthrow him because in December 1979 Soviet tanks rolled into Afghanistan. While people were freed of Amin what took shape was a Soviet Vietnam scenario and eventual training ground for foreign Al-Qaida fighters And promotion of fanaticism among Afghans. Furthermore, pitting the Afghan government against the mujahidin as proxies for the Cold War between the USSR and USA.

In 1980, Babrak Karmal, former 1960s parliamentarian, became the country's fourth president. President Karmal was a graduate of Habibia Lycee and Kabul University and went on to become a member of the 1960s parliament. Literacy courses and programs educating about health, technology were expanded throughout the country. Ansary (2002) explains that lots of advances in education were made. Since the 1950s the educational system was becoming increasingly indoctrinated and funded by the USSR. This trend increased after the Red Army invasion. However, Dar-al-Olum, as well the Islamic Studies Department at the university, religious teaching in primary and secondary schools remained intact, religious madrassas and other learning centers became part of the modern educational system.

Part of the reforms included the creation of a Pedagogical research centers. In 1981, the Central Institute for the Retraining of Teachers was established. In 1982, the Kabul Pedagogical Institute was founded. Figures from the 1980's show that about 1,000 licensed Afghan doctors graduated yearly not including those on student visas in foreign countries.

Further academic exchanges were established with Eastern Bloc countries as the American and Western exchanges stopped. Starting in 1978, many West German projects were taken over by East Germany until 1989. In fact, the East Germans built the Hotaki high school. Kabul University for the first time established a Spanish Language Department. In the 1980's about 70 students registered for Spanish courses each semester (Rovira, 2002).

In the 1980s, the government placed emphasis on adult education, literacy programs, higher education, and the other languages of Afghanistan. According to Burhan (1972), even until in the 1970s no concern was shown for the Turkic language speakers who constituted 10% of the population. In the 1980s, some of those languages merited recognition by the Ministry of Education.

In 1986, Dr. Muhammad Najibullah, former head of the Afghan intelligence agency, became the country's fifth president. That same year, a new university was founded in Balkh. President

Najibullah, a graduate of the school of medicine at Kabul University realized the need for more higher education throughout the country by opening two new universities were founded in Herat (1988), and Kandahar (1991). While facing obstacles on other front, the government was succeeding in educating and fighting literacy:

> "the enrollment in institutions of higher education increased at an annual rate of four percent with a total enrollment of 14,600 students in 1990, Kabul University had about 10,000 students (sixty percent female) and 620 teachers" (Samady, 2001, P.72).

This increased the number of students at the local level:

> "In 1991, there were 577 primary schools with an enrollment of 628,000 pupils including 212,000 girls. Enrollments in secondary education and higher education were 182,000 and 24,000 respectively" (Samady, 2001, P. 77).

It is from Giustozzi (2000) that we are informed that while the government and mujahidin battled, the mujahidin in Kandahar sent their children to government schools because the alternative was undeveloped education.

The government's opposition had an inferior educational system. The already weak system was paralyzed when the Soviet Union left in 1989 because U.S. aid to the Afghan factions in Pakistan dropped tremendously while money from Saudi Arabia tripled:

> "Much of that aid went into building the Islamic religious schools" (Healy, 2003).

At the end of ten years, there were 40,000 of these schools, most religious schools, in the borderland area of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Some experts reported the Pakistani government was ultimately responsible for all schools in the refugee camps, although many factions had organized their own schools in the Northwestern Frontier Province (NWFP) than in Baluchistan.

Furthermore, although the majority of refugees sought shelter in NWFP, the Pakistani government's only seven sponsored Dari-language schools existed in Baluchistan. So, parents wanting Dari language instruction had to either send their children to private schools or to the factional sponsored schools. The educational system was an institutional and systematic failure for the obvious reasons such as inefficient teacher-student ratios, learning material deficiency, inclusion of at least 3 age groups in each class, and lack of sheltered building.

During the Afghan conflict, some children in neighboring refugees were being taught that

> "three tanks plus two rocket-propelled grenades is equal to five instruments of [war] ... weapons of war were used as typical examples for teaching arithmetic - common, as they were, as apples and oranges" (Prusher, 2002, P. 12).

Very few kids attained a modern educational upbringing unless they entered other than these schools. It was the militant infusion into the educational content, mentioned earlier, that led to create a generation solely dependent on war to resolve hostility.

Demise of Modern Education

In April 1992 the Afghan government transferred power to the Islamic Jihad Council (IJC) which was designated by the Peshawar Accords. Within days the various factions collided and Kabul was engulfed in urban warfare cascading throughout the country.

This had immense impact on education. There was no uniform curriculum and religious education was prioritized as more important. The equal education opportunities of boys and girls were not provided while religious schools for boys were encouraged. To make matter worse, schools and Kabul University became the stages for warfare and pillage (Shorish, 1998).

Due to fighting and the security situation the universities and schools were frequently closed. There was damage to buildings and insecurity, which affected school attendance as teachers, administrators, and students became displaced. Schools and universities became the stages for warfare and pillage. Even laboratories, furniture, and the electric wiring from inside the walls of its classrooms were stolen.

According to Basharat (2002), the rival factions targeted the libraries and thousands of volumes were either looted or burnt, and rare titles smuggled and sold off for high prices in the antiquarian book markets of the United States, Europe and Japan:

> "The University Library, opened in 1964, was another victim. It used to contain about a million books, including a huge archive of scientific journals, some 7,000 academic monographs, and more than 500 manuscripts and hundreds of bound archived copies of magazines and newspapers."

In an article entitled *Raping the Libraries of Kabul* details of how the various factions burnt or sold millions of hand written books on religion, history, poetry, and autobiographies of great scholars (Hussain, 1998). From that million-volume collection only 20,000 books survived.

Nonetheless, a glimmer of hope for modern education occurred between 1992 and 1994, in Mazar-e Sharif where primary and secondary schools as well as Balkh University resumed. Most of the teachers from Kabul University sought refuge to the north. In Herat there was the emergence of higher educational organizations. Herat University had several functioning faculties in 1994.

By 1996, Afghanistan was divided into two military groups: the Northern Alliance (former mujahidin) and the Taliban. The Taliban who mainly grew up in orphanages or rather religious seminary schools in Pakistan. These schools promoted the Deobandi and Wahabi denominations of Islam and manifested in the Taliban:

> "By 1999, at least eight Taliban Cabinet ministers in Kabul were graduates of the Pakistani [Deobandi] school and dozens more graduates served as Taliban provincial governors, military commanders, judges and bureaucrats" (Kremmer, 2001).

The Deobandis and Wahabis, both reformists' movements, have restrictive reformatory views on art, music, the role of women, and other sects of Islam. Since coming to power 1995, Taliban completely closed down school especially any for girls. Only religious studies in religious schools (madrassas) were allowed for boys. Still, many Afghans schooled their children illegally at home in modern educational curriculum.

"According to UNESCO, over the past two decades, Afghanistan lost an estimated 20,000 experts and academics, while its 17 universities and institutes were left devastated by conflict" (UN News Service, 2002).

The thousands of teachers and education administrators became victims of war, underwent intellectual apartheid, or left Afghanistan especially after the Taliban took over Kabul in 1996.

FUTURE OF MODERN EDUCATION

Government Policy

After the 2001 Bonn Conference, the steps of resurrecting the modern educational system started to be taken. A large part of the discussion on modern education involves government policy. The Afghan government's policies on education will most likely come from the political leadership and recently adopted constitution. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on the positive aspects of the recently (2003) adopted constitution of Afghanistan that deals primarily with education. In summary:

> The government shall promote education at all levels. Free education is granted to all Afghans until the level of the B.A. The government shall promote education for women, improving of education of nomads and elimination of illiteracy in the country. The government shall establish and operate higher, general and vocational education. The citizens of Afghanistan and foreign powers also can establish higher, general, and vocational private educational institutions and literacy courses with the permission of the state. Furthermore, the state in order to promote physical education and improve national and local sports adopts necessary measures. (articles 17, 43, 44, 46, 42)

President Hamid Karzai during his *2003 State of the Nation Address* said: *"Education is a high priority."* It remains to be seen whether the president's commitment enabled now by the constitution will remain strong and fruitful or succumb to the worldwide devaluation of educational issues by politicians or tyranny of conservatives.

Higher Education

After so much war, the fashion sensed and bastion of Afghan public discourse at Kabul University was decimated. The higher educational system underwent a terrible transformation as noted by the Higher Education Minister who noted this on his first day arriving to the ministry:

> "God, there are so many janitors [a group of unwashed men in turbans, long beards, robes and shawls] here. What's going on?"

It turned out that the janitors were professors of Kabul University. Already the Ministry of Higher Education has hired more than 100 women and hopes to achieve an affirmative action equal numbers of men and women (Sheridan, 2002, P. A7).

In November 2002, the Afghan University in Peshawar, Pakistan was relocated to Khost. The university had an enrollment of about 2,000 students while in Pakistan. The official spokesman of Khost's governor said,

> "Another building has been prepared as a hostel for the students near the university, and this had accommodation for 1,000 students it is intended that of the 1,000 students only 300 would be female students" (Afghan Islamic Press, 2002).

Important steps are also taking to preserve the small and fledging departments at Kabul University. For example,

> "After a hiatus of more than six years, instruction in Spanish has resumed in Afghanistan, with ten university students learning the language because 'so many people speak it'" (Ortiz, 2003).

Department Chair, Mohammed Kabir Nesoami, directs four professors along with several Spanish soldiers. The department offered two quarters with 12 students, 10 of whom finished the courses (Ortiz, 2003). In addition, the Turkish Language Department at Kabul University, Department of Dari Language at Nangahar University and Departments of Pashto Languages at Herat University and Balkh University have been set up (Radio Afghanistan, 2003).

Other efforts include four Japanese universities offering a three-year commitment to train 10-20 Afghan women teachers for six weeks terms. Other countries and organizations have also pledged new financial and training support. It is hoped that all of these pledges are followed through and materialize for the betterment of the Afghan society.

The University of California, Davis is studying the prospects of a partnership with the University of Kabul and the Ministries of Higher Education and Agriculture. Also, the German Academic Exchange Program (DAAD) is assessing the revival of its many partnerships with Kabul University and the other universities in Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, and Jalalabad. In the meantime a private organization, German-Afghan University Partnership (Deutsch-Afghanische University's-Gessellschaft) was launched in September 2002. In July 2003, the US government announced that a private group is studying the building of an American University in Afghanistan.

According to the *Education Working Group Report* published in 2002 at the Afghanistan-America Summit, many notable universities have joined in efforts in the educational reconstruction. The University of Nebraska at Omaha has a long history of collaborating in Education. Purdue University has signed an agreement to collaborate in Engineering, Applied Engineering, Agriculture and Management. The Midwestern University Consortium on International Affairs is considering joining these and related efforts. Portland State University is undertaking activities in Education and Social Science. The University of Pittsburgh is undertaking projects in Higher Education Administration. The University of Arizona is committed to a new program training ESL/EFL teachers, and Georgetown University is considering a role in Law and Medicine partnerships. President Karzai mentioned in his recent address over 26,000 students attended higher education institutions (Radio Afghanistan, 2003).

Primary and Secondary Education

The second school year started in March 2003:

> "5.8 million students [were expected] go to school, up from 3.3 million last year [2002].

> The United Nations has a more conservative estimate -- about 4.5 million ? Reasons for the expected increase range from more schools opening or being rebuilt to the return last year of 1.8 million refugees, many of them children, from neighboring Pakistan an Iran, UNICEF spokesman Edward Carwardine" (Pitman, 2003).

This is a step forward in the nation building process and revamping the educational system. Furthermore, other achieves which are

> "Central to the new effort will be creation in Kabul of a National Academy of Education, which will concentrate on curriculum development, strategic planning and training for instructors. Teachers from education colleges in Afghanistan's 32 provinces will participate in programs at the academy. They will return to their local colleges as mentors" (Goldman, 2003).

In addition, Kabul Pedagogical Institute has been made into a university. President Karzai mentioned in his recent address that there are 6,000 partly or completely devastated schools where about 83;187 teachers taught (Radio Afghanistan, 2003). In January 2004, the Ministry of Education requested 200 million dollars to carry out its 31 step basic plan in order to absorb more than 1.5 million students deprived of going to school.

Gender Obstacles in Education

> "Many girls have returned to school.. But attacks on schools and book burnings have intensified lately" (Thorne, 2003).

During the 2002-2003 school year, several girls' school outside Kabul were either rocketed or burned down by terrorists or fanatics.

> "If schools for girls are being fire-bombed, if your children are in harm's way because you want them educated, if you are afraid to leave your home, then clearly, the thugs will continue to win" (Armstrong, 2003).

In March 2003 when President Karzai vowed to fight for female education in Afghanistan.

> "Millions of girls have gone back to school, but the majority of the school-age girls are still out of school, partly because of security concerns--families are afraid to send their girls to school because--the sense that they might be sexually assaulted or even kidnapped on the way to school, especially outside of major cities" (Sifton, 2003).

In line with the late 1970s government policy on literacy, he suggested waging a jihad against opponents of female education (Deutsche Press-Agentur, 2003). Institutionally, President Karzai has also had to face his administration's Ministry of Justice and Supreme Court are packed with religious conservatives who favor traditional education over modern education. As a result of a resurrected mid-1970s law:

> "Thousands of young Afghan women have been expelled from school simply because they are married the exact number of women who've been expelled, but that it was "possibly more than two or three thousand" (Institute of War and Reporting, 2003).

President Daoud's government created this law so that young girls in school would not be

encouraged to get married and have kids but rather remain in school until they receive their terminal degree. The current judges in the administration have resurrected this law with the sole purpose of preventing women from education. Thus, oppressing women but misusing laws.

Education Curriculum

According to Haskell (2002), over 5 million of more than 175 different textbooks for science, math, and reading in Dari and Pashtu were distributed in March 2002:

> "The effort to resupply an education system that nearly ceased functioning is being sponsored by the University of Nebraska at Omaha and by a $6.5 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development" (Khan, 2002, P. 1). "Near five million more [came] from printing plants in Pakistan" (Haskell, 2002, P. 2). "The job of printing millions of textbooks in just a few weeks required running the press day and night as well as contracting with other printing plants in Pakistan" (Butty, 2002c).

For the 2003 school year, UNO Center for Afghanistan Studies lost out in its bid to print textbooks but it is seeking other educational related grants. Creative Associates International won the contract but it is printing the same books in Indonesia (Butty, 2003). Exporting the task of curriculum to experts outside Afghanistan might lend itself to a comparative advance but the drawbacks are numerous including content control and job loss from the Afghanistan.

> "The new texts are a temporary fix. Over the next two years, educators here want to create a curriculum that not only will teach young Afghans about the world but also work to counter the constant messages of violence and hatred. They want to insert a different, humanist type of propaganda" (Memmott, 2002).

As it stand Creative Associates International will create a shadow education ministry. After their perspective contract expires they will leave taking their foreign experts and tools. They do not hire local because they claims that they seek highly experience and professional applicants. This story about a 26-year-old teacher in Kabul reveals the conflict:

> "Because I didn't have higher education, I was laid off along with many others when their job were cut and we were replaced by our refugee brothers and sisters. The people who stayed in Afghanistan couldn't get higher education. Now, when the standard requirement for many jobs is English and computer skills, we are disadvantaged" (Maruf, 2002).

Instead the donors should help the Afghan develop the tools to create the reforms and took be trained with the know-how for the nation's future.

> "At the Ministry of Education, the corridors are clogged with broken furniture. There's no heat in the offices where Kabul scholars labor to rewrite the school curriculum. They go through the textbooks line by line locating hateful passages and substitute them with innocuous words like apples and oranges" (Mansbridge, 2002).

The days that education books contained arithmetic examples such as 3 tanks and 2 grenades made five instruments of jihad should end (Butty, 2002a; Stephens, 2002; Prusher, 2002). According to

Butty (2002b), the Director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies, Thomas Gouttierre said much of the criticism focuses on the militaristic content of books published by University of Nebraska at Omaha before 1989.

It was content like this that gave rise to fanatics and the violent culture which destroyed Bamiyan's buddha monuments, led to the genocide of Afghans, and the September 11th tragedy. All such books that were filled with violent and fanatic messages should be destroyed, never published again and only to be used for research purposes.

According to UNICEF spokesman Alfred Ironside, the alliance of the UN Children's Fund, 24 private agencies and 70 Afghan educators want to develop materials that are more progressive than the current book delivered to Afghanistan's educational system (Butty, 2002a).

The next generations of books need to be easy for children to learn, pedagogically superior, and not be based on rote learning or memorization.Furthermore, if education is based on rote learning then assessment exams will server no purpose. It will only reveal that students have good memorization skills. The author has also been involved in curriculum content review of grade 1 and grade 4 books. Education must expand the knowledge base of Afghans allowing them to undertake socioeconomic, cultural, and the political transformation necessary to nation build and deliver desirable developments.

Grassroot Education Projects

As a result of having the largest refugee population in the world and globalization, Afghanistan's educational reconstruction is being directly affected by the Afghan Diaspora. The Afghan populations abroad can help Afghanistan by shifting from brain drain to brain gain. So far, projects that range from book drives, structural rebuilding of libraries and schools, to opening up a computer training center at the learning institutions and Ministry of Education have been launched.

For example, Hekmat Sadat, a local from southern California, organized with students from UC San Diego, the bookstores of San Diego State University, Azuza Pacific University, Cal State University Hayward, San Diego County school districts, and also locals from Amnesty International and other organizations to donate books. His initiative resulted in the collection of 10000 college textbooks: 6000 delivered to the Asia Foundation and 4000 delivered to Afghanistan Relief Organization.

A middle school class in Illinois sold watercolors of Afghan rugs painted by them and raffling off chores to be performed by teachers:

> "Ultimately, Ms. Greenwald's students donated 1,400 picture books-each with a translation pasted inside" (Stern, 2003).

Other efforts include President George Bush's the call to all American students to donate a dollar for the students of Afghanistan.

The Asia Foundation's Books for Asia Program dedicated at least 40,000 volumes of books to Kabul University and also other universities and libraries. UNESCO has also been collecting books

for Afghanistan. In addition, the Sabre Foundation is getting ready a shipment of textbooks to be sent to Afghanistan. The Asia Foundation and UNESCO are still accepting donations from private organizations and individual. Contacting college bookstores in the spring semester and school districts for book and supply donations has proven to be extremely useful.

In addition, *The New York Times*' foreign desk editor contacted this author in response to the UNESCO request for journalism book donations. In addition, the author is aware of at least 12 other book drives around the United States and United Kingdom by Afghan expatriates and friends of the Afghan people. Booksforfreedom.org was formed after news broadcasts on the dire situation of the libraries of Afghanistan was aired.

United Nations Association of San Diego (UNA-SD) raised funds for school equipment to be bought for schools in Kabul and also donated K-12 learning materials to Afghan Relief Organization. Another organization, The Rotary Club of La Jolla, San Diego is opening a school in Jalalabad. In April 2003, Sister Schools of San Diego (SSSD) brought four Afghan Educators to San Diego for training and to promote San Diego-Afghanistan Partnerships. The Society of Afghan Professionals (SAP) based in Fremont, California has also established a book drive supporting the Asia Foundation. A fundraised in Berlin publicized by the local newspaper raised enough donations to rebuild and open girls' school in Kabul in June 2002. Another effort by The Deutsche Welle and Cap Anamur project has built close to 300 classrooms in Afghanistan. Japanese students raised fund to build a school for girls in the Bamiyan region. Another organization, www.kids4afghankids.com has been educating Afghan children by sending supplies, money and building facilities. Other book and equipment drives as well as fundraisers for schools and reconstruction of the education sector took place among the Afghan expatriates and local communities.

New York University has begun a project, Afghanistan Digital Library, to digitize all the books between 1871 and 1930 in Afghanistan. Carol A. Mandel, dean of the Division of Libraries, said the university has just begun rising the $1.5 million the project will cost. About 400 books will be available to the public via Internet (Lee, 2003). This measure is a step towards rebuilding the literature heritage of Afghanistan.

WHEN THERE'S EDUCATION, THERE'S HOPE

> "The nation-builders to invest in are the teachers, especially the women who taught girls in secret during the Taliban years. I met one in an open-air school right in the middle of Kabul's most destroyed neighborhood. She wrote her name in a firm, bold hand in my notebook, and she knew exactly what she needed: chalk, blackboards, desks, a roof and, God willing, a generation of peace. At her feet, on squares of U.N.H.C.R. sheeting, sat her class, 20 upturned faces, all female, having the first reading lesson of their lives" (Ignatieff, 2002).

In September 2002, the *Montreal Gazette* printed the story of eight-year-old Abdullah which revealed the potentials for nation building. He shared his vision that he plans to become a teacher so he can help others in his country. Abdullah trekked two hours up and down a mountain barefoot at dawn to get to his school. Everyone in his village is poor that they do not even have food for

lunch and their school a mud building is barren. The winters are freezing and there is no lighting or bathrooms outside. Everyone sits on the sub-zero floors and there are no books. When school is over, Abdullah goes to help his family by collecting livestock dung to be used for burning. Still, Abdullah is happy that he can attend school.

For the educational reconstruction to realize its key role in development, its major development objectives must be carried to the remaining 3 million children of whom only 40% of boys and 96% of girls cannot read or write. The younger segments of the society must be provided education as quickly as humanly and financially permissive.

To make matters worse, an estimated 85% of the total population is illiterate. The ultimate goal being the development of a comprehensive system of education at all levels and for all age groups. In addition, emphasis must be placed upon a more equitable distribution of educational opportunities and the reduction of existing inequalities based on sex, ethnicity, language, region, or economic situation.

Similarly, the internal efficiency of the educational system must prevent mismanagement, corruption, nepotism, and step towards improving the quality of education, and reducing student attrition rates. The educational system must add extra value by putting out students that will be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to reconstruct their homeland.

Most would agree that education is about human development and attitude change. In this respect, improved and tolerant education can contribute much towards nation building. However, a major variable that in this process is teaching the values of democracy, human rights, ecology, social justice, and acceptance of diversity. Since 50% of the educated people have only a background in religious studies, it is of utmost importance to invest in scientific education. Afghanistan desperately needs to graduate doctors, architects, engineers, psychologists, social scientists, artisans, and technical students.

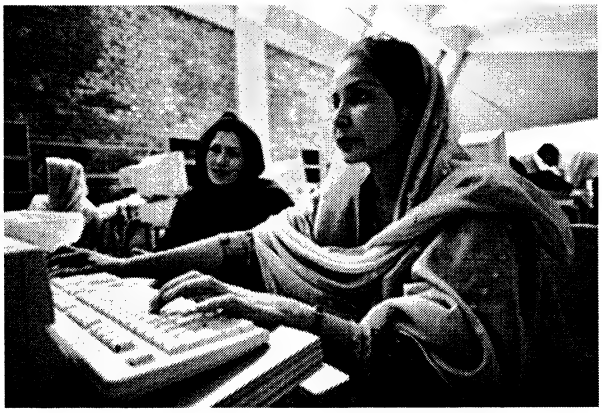
The educational system of Afghanistan is a bilingual model. Still, nothing has been accomplished in the area of Afghan bilingual education. The most important factor hindering the development of education in Afghanistan is not technical or financial constraints but the ethno-linguistic divisions. In Afghanistan, the bilingual model was always taught in the way foreign languages are taught. There are great examples in bilingual models in Switzerland and the United States. In addition, teachers and faculty need to be enriched to become bilingual. Furthermore, if Afghanistan is to recover as a nation, then this sociopolitical issue needs to be addressed.

Unfortunately, enemies of the state have since the 1920s propagated that government schooling is unreligious and if children attend schools, they become infidels. This propagation wedged the traditional educational system versus the modern educational system. Advocates of both systems know that social transformation is partially the result of education outcomes. While one seeks to take the land and people backwards, the other seeks to take the land and people forwards.

Educational outcomes are output of economic resources and human capital. The dilemma is obvious here. Capital and labor is needed to create quality education and quality education is needed to create economic development. This is a unique vicious circle but the formula must be

Modern Education in Afghanistan

Mir Hekmatullah Sadat
March 2004



Engineering Student at Kabul University
Spring 2002
Photo by Pia Torelli (©)

Note: Parts of this paper were presented as remarks at the 2nd Annual Fundraiser *When There's Education, There's Hope* of Afghanistan Relief Organization in Orange County, California on January 25, 2004.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Afghanistan! It is with great personal humility and yet pride that I introduce you to the resilient and hope inspiring children of Afghanistan. It is hard to write about a country, from which one has been kept away from and only lived vicariously through others' experiences. It is especially hard when one has had the complete opposite experience: peace, sustenance, education, and prosperity.

It is more difficult to image how children lived through a period that can only be termed as the Afghan genocide. Yet, it is noteworthy that throughout misery, Afghans kept a pragmatic and optimistic approach:

> "Despite the tragic war, Afghans inside Afghanistan and as refugees outside the country, in conditions of poverty and despair, showed a keen interest in the education of their children" (Samady, 2001, P.7).

It i. vith deep remorse, joy, and promise in the resilience that the topic of education be addressed.

Wha. do we mean by education? Well. when you become educated. you are stimulating or

started somewhere; otherwise, we will be debating about this chicken and egg scenario for ages.

A society recovering from war will have to subsidize the learning and education of its people:

> "I liked school, and I even learned some foreign words, but now I have to work to feed my family," Mahmad said with both pride and regret. "I'd like to study to be a mechanic some day, but I just don't have the time" (Constable, 2003).

Programs need to be developed which resolve the work-study tensions:

> "My children are hungry, my father is sick, and we are afraid to go out at night," said Khalid Mahmad, 54. None of his children attend school, and he has not been able to find work. "We've spent all our money, and we can't go back to Iran," he said. "We are stuck" (Constable, 2003).

For whatever reasons there was a tremendous brain drain in Afghanistan. Now, there must be an initiative to reverse this phenomenon to attract back those highly skilled personnel working overseas. This process is related to the wider issue of modernization, science, technology and culture. The educational system research must be improved, salaries for educated instructor paid highly, and research into bettering the plight of Afghans funded not frivolously but generously.

The educational system can be an instrument to impart civic culture and unifying diverse sub-populations within a common Afghan civil society. Since the country is fragmented along various warlord drawn lines, linguistic diversity makes it difficult to reduce illiteracy rates. It can do so by training bureaucrats, technocrats, and satiating the intellectual hungry. The system can generate loyalty to the nation, meeting socioeconomic demands, and replenishing the pool of future leaders. In short, education can become a means to teach a moral value system based on coexistence, co-dependency, progress, and most importantly an "Afghanism" that supercedes any sectarian or political affiliations.

CONCLUSION

Afghanistan once flourished because it was the gateway to the Indian subcontinent along the Silk Route. Since the days of Marco Polo, many influential scholars of philosophy, literature and science emerged from the territory known present-day as Afghanistan.

Still, the best quote for the needs and determination for education comes from Sharbat Gul who has lost her parents to the bombing of her village:

> "I want my daughters to have skills.
> I wanted to finish school but could not.
> I was sorry when I had to leave." (Griffin, 2002).

29-year old Sharbat Gul has three daughters. She cannot read, and has never seen a magazine. She never saw the photograph that made her face so well know around the world, until the National

Geographic team showed it to her in the remote village of Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan.

After knowing everything she has endured, she gave the most realistic solution in an interview. It was the best quote for the needs and determination for education.

For over two decades the fires of war destroyed most of Afghanistan. With hope, resilience, caring, and access to modern education; the people have a chance to uplift their country from the ashes and regain the legacy of their forefathers.

Zindabad Afghanistan (Long Live Afghanistan).

developing your mental or moral growth. By knowledge, we refer to the sum or range of what has been perceived, discovered, or learned.

This paper will discuss the Afghans' hope for attaining an education, provide a history of modern education, and creating hope by offering education. A few major commonalities between Afghan expatriates, global citizens, and the people in Afghanistan strike out: Hope! Resilience! Caring!

Afghans are resilient people because of hope. The proverbial *Khuda Mehraban hast* (God is Giving) and *Inshallah* (God willing) are cornerstones of Afghan resilience. Those that stayed behind had everything taken from them but their hope remained unbroken. Nonetheless, it is with firmness that the Afghan government must be held to its promise that *"education is a high priority"* and US government to its promise that *"Afghanistan remains a top priority."*

WHEN THERE'S HOPE, THERE'S EDUCATION

The phrase *Knowledge is Power* depends on the motto *When There's Education, There's Hope.* What is hope? Hope is found in the likes of Mohammad Sayid, whose 12-year-old daughter Fatima started her first day of school:

> "This will be historic year [2002], especially for this young generation because this is the year that peace came to Afghanistan ? Our country will keep getting better, day by day, God willing" (Buchbinder, 2002, P.24)

After a decade of forced hibernation, children in Afghanistan finally heard the chimes of school bells in 2002. For most, it was the first time they stepped onto a school campus. On March 23rd, 2002 1.5 million, only 33% of the estimated 4.4 million, students started school.

Half of the Afghan population is under 18 years of age. Most under the age of 13 have never set foot on school grounds or received any form of education. First grade classes are filled with students ranging in ages from 5 to 12.

Ahmed Rashid (2003) reflects on the significance of 2002's back to school campaign in Afghanistan as having drawn in the largest attendance in Islamic history. Some like Brown (2002) can not believe why people engaged in teaching and receiving home schooling violating the ban on education. She further questions why school children are happy to be going to school while she remembers enjoying playing sick to miss school days.

The answer is simple!

For once, kids worried about a round of hopscotch and *geer-ak-kan* (you're it) rather than stepping on landmines, ducking to miss bullets, being under house arrest, suffering from depression and other ailments. Thousands of children laughed, cried, and teased each other in the sanctuary of decimated schools.

Aside from these dramatic images, alone the nostalgic images and thoughts of the first day at school give many chills. Along with many government officials who inaugurated the school

season, parents, teachers, and students were brought to tears at the sight of all those young and eager minds. There is again a prospect for students in Afghanistan to participate in the global village!

Imagine how children who witnessed killing, beating, hunger, rape feel when they have been given the chance to be kids seeking shelter on the sacred grounds of a learning institution? How hard is it to fathom the idea that a generation of children suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder? Yet, can you imagine how precious it is when you can squeak out grateful smiles from those sitting, undernourished and barefoot, sitting in barren classrooms or tents without proper learning material, no school lunches, no functioning playgrounds, and makeshift tent schools?

According to UNICEF's Chulho Hyun,

> "When we think about school, we think about desks, a blackboard and a nice building ? That's not the case in Afghanistan. An inspiring sight in a place where hope is hard to come by" (Bloom, 2002, P.15).

Inspirational because schools are being pitched in refugee camps and face the harsh realities of post-war life.

This is the power of the human soul that feeds off of hope and resilience. This combined with pragmatism turns the ugliest playgrounds and classrooms into centers of hope while we were enjoying episodes of Mister Roger's Neighborhood, Sesame Street, or the Disney Channel.

As we grew older we lost some of our imagination and creativity but the children of Afghanistan always amazed us from the green-eyed refugee girl, Sharbat Gul to Fatima who says:

> "It's my first time in school, ever, and unfortunately there's a lot that I don't know yet ? But I'm very happy. I wanted to be in school, and now I'm here" (Buchbinder, 2002, P.24).

America is talking about send a mission into space again. Belief it or not! Afghanistan has already in 1988 been to space but today the Afghan educational system is in such shambles that students have never see a globe or a map of the world.

Afghanistan was not always this way. In order to understand the present situation and future challenges of education in Afghanistan one must study its past history in educational development. While the following is by far a brief presentation, those interested in reconstructing the educational system of Afghanistan will surely find it usefulness in the reconstruction process.

HISTORY

Emergence of Modern Education

Starting in early in the 20th century, as modern learning institutions made their first attempts toward achieving social integration and national development. The impetus of an educational system was made until Amir Sher Ali's (1863-79) rule. According to Shorish (1988), the two

famous schools were Maktab-e-Harbia (War School) in Shirpur and Mulki-e-Khawanin (Royalty school) in Bala-Hissar. Due to the burden of the second Afghan-Anglo War, the experiment was discontinued.

Later, Amir Abdur Rahman (1880-1901) opened some schools for members of the aristocracy, members of the bureaucracy and their families, and selected officers of the army. In addition, the government taught its ghulam-bachas (slave boys) who were sent to be educated and serve loyally to the king.

The first formal steps at creating a modern educational system occurred during the reign of Amir Habibullah (1901-1919). In 1903, he founded Habibia Lycee, which eventually adopted the curriculum of British Indian high schools. According to Ghobar (1967), Habibia Lycee produced intellectuals and some students were sent abroad to study in British India. Great strides were made in social literacy, newsprint, libraries, and public discourse.

In 1906, Sayyid Ahmad Kandahari created a literacy method and wrote 6 books including a teacher's guide. In 1907, the Office of Textbooks was established to produce textbooks for the modern schools.

In the early 20th century, it became necessary to create an independent teacher-training institute that would have its own standard curriculum or competency required for the instructors and students. So, in 1912, the first teacher training college, Dar-al-Malimin, was established in Kabul and the next year the primary school system was broadened:

> "The Department of Education was established in 1913 for the first time in order to modernize and broaden the curriculum of the traditional schools" (Miran, 1975, P.51).

Amir Habibullah's son, Prince Enayatullah, was appointed Head of the Department. Education and school supplies were provided free of charge to all students. In addition, a small stipend was awarded to students as an incentive to pursue an education.

Most of the foundation for the educational system in Afghanistan was established after Shah Amanullah rose to the leadership and seized national independence in 1919. In 1922, the Ministry of Education was added and Prince Abdur Rahman was appointed as the country's first Minister of Education.

Shah Amanullah and members of the Amani Movement established primary schools in major towns, villages, and cities. In 1922, with the assistance of French curriculum and teachers, Amaniyya (renamed in October 1929 to Istiqlal) Lycee was established. A year later, Amani (renamed in October 1929 to Nijat) Lycee was founded as a German high school. In 1927, Ghazi Lycee was founded and taught in the English. This was an attempt to bring Afghanistan closer to the educational standards in Turkey, Egypt and most importantly Europe. In addition,

> "In 1924, two vocational schools were opened, Maktab-e-Hukkam for administrative purposes, and the School of Fine and Applied Arts" (Miran, 1975, P.51).

In addition to schools in each province there were also schools for the country's nomads.

According to Miran (1975), during the Amani Period 14 intermediate and high schools were opened in Kabul and in parts of provincial capitals:

> "One goal was a national system of schools with a modern curriculum. The beginnings of a network of government-run intermediate and secondary schools was achieved in 1928; as many as 40,000 students were enrolled" (Newell, 1972, P.54).

After the exiled Mahmud Tarzi returned from Turkey in 1901, he quickly was promoted to high government positions. As an Afghan statesman, Mahmud Tarzi, was a major lobbyist for a modern education system provided by the government. Referred as the father of Afghan journalism and the having the opportunity to study in India and Syria, Tarzi knew the value of modern education. Tarzi used his influence as the father-in-law of Shah Amanullah and also his status at the nation's first foreign minister to impart wisdom and courage to his daughter, Queen Soraya.

The progressive trends of the Amani Movement led to the creation of the first girl's high school, Masturat, in 1921 by Queen Soraya. Her mother, Rasmiya, served as the school's first principal. In the period 1921-28 over 800 females attended Masturat (Bashiri, 2002). In 1928, co-education began in the first and second grades of Amaniyya Lycee.

Since no formal higher education system existed, top graduates were sent abroad to Germany, France, and Egypt in order to further their higher education potentials. Among them were some females who were sent to Turkey to continue their education. During the Amani period,

> "there were 205 Afghan students, including 10 girls, in Turkey" (Ghobar, 1999, P.69).

Unfortunately, enemies of the state propagated that government schooling is unreligious and if children attend schools, they become infidels. The propaganda wedged the traditional educational system (dominated by the clergy, feudal landlords, and tribal chieftain) versus the modern educational system (dominated by the state, intelligentsia, and urbanites). This tension coupled with foreign-sponsored insurgents incited by the Deobandi denomination clergy led to the 1929 rebellion. The educational system were brandished and defamed by the same factors leading to the rebellion.

Development of Modern Education

In January 1929, Shah Amanullah, in an attempt to prevent a civil war and bloodshed, abdicated and sought self-exile in Italy. All advancements made during his rule were reversed after his departure. Kabul was capture by a militia commander, Habibullah Kalakani, who ruled for 9-months. During this period, the regime and tribal leaders closed all schools.

Kalakani later surrendered but was executed by General Mohammad Nadir who had returned from France to regain the throne for Shah Amanullah. Instead, the general was proclaimed king by his comrade-in-arms. Ansary (1991) explains the general did not restore Shah Amanullah and some regard him as a usurper. In any case, while the new king was a cosmopolitan person, much of the progress of the progressive decade was undone. The regime had formed close ties with certain

clergy and tribal chieftain Who eventually became the political base of the government.

In 1933 after his father's assassination at the commencement ceremony of Amani Lycee, Prince Muhammad Zahir, a liberal and mild mannered teenager was crowned king Still, the remnants of the feelings of anti-modern education persisted. Not much progress had been made on the national education program. The religious conservatives which in part led the uprising against Shah Amanullah were immensely entrenched in the Nadir Shah regime especially in the ministry of justice and court system. Hence, limiting modern education in favor of more traditional education.

According to Ghobar (1999), *Islah* newspaper quoted Shah Amanullah's former Education Minister, Faiz Mohammad Zikria (1925-27) that in the king last year in 1929, there were 83,000 female and male students in Afghan schools. Yet, according to Afghanistan's Official Statistical Book published by the Nadir Shah regime, the respective of number of students published were 45,091 and number of teachers was 165. Why did the numbers provided by Shah Amanullah's Education Minister, F.M. Zikria, and the report published by the Nadir Shah government differ? Did Minister Zikria overstate or the Nadir Shah regime understate? Not only was there a reduction in the reported number of students, but also in the number of teachers. Even with 45,091 students and 165 teachers being a correct statistic, the student to teacher ratio would be about 279 students per one teacher. This was a practical impossibility at that time since the infrastructure did not provide for such large classrooms. Ghobar (1999) explains there were only 27 schools for millions of people, which gave an impression that maybe the Afghan people were not interested in education. In order to please the religious and tribal conservatives, the new regime took on drastic regressive reforms:

> "Among the first steps taken by the new monarchy was the closure of female schools and the Women Association of Kabul. The *Irshad-e Naswan*, the only newspaper published for enlightening women, was also banned. The government recalled the female Afghan students from Turkey and forced them to put on the veil. It imprisoned nine students returning from Turkey" (Ghobar, 1999, P.68).

One progressive move came in 1931 women were finally allowed to take classes at the Masturat Hospital in Kabul. In addition, in 1932, the faculty of medicine was founded.

Another regressive reform, which has been a controversial topic for Afghans, was the issue of language:

> "In 1936, as part of [Zahir Shah's family] the Musahiban's attempt to strengthen the national ideology, Pashto was recognized as the official language. During King Amanullah's reign both Pashto and Dari (Afghan Persian) were considered official languages" (Zulfacar, Page 14).

The government decided to replace the language of instructions, Dari, with only Pashtu in an attempt to bolster the state's claim on Pashtunistan, currently Pakistan's Northwestern Frontier Province. In 1946, the king's uncle, Prime Minister Muhammad Hashim, resigned and another uncle, Shah Mahmud, took over. The government policy on the language of instruction was improved to a so-called bilingual model of Dari and Pashtu.

Nonetheless, there were some other progressive moves too:

> "In 1939 the Ministry of Education under Prince [Muhammad] Naim created a High School for girls, called for several years a 'Nursing School' to prevent any social disturbance" (Watkins, 1963, P.172).

In the higher education system, the following academic faculties were established: law (1938), science (1942) and letters (1944). However, entrance to these faculties was reserved mainly for members of the aristocracy and the family members of top bureaucrats. In addition, private tutors gave high-ranking and wealthy Afghans the cultural capital -languages, literature, sciences, etc - necessary to leverage themselves in society.

Some favorable trends started to emerge in the late 1940s. Government expenditures on education came to comprise 40% of the national budget. In 1946, a Women's Institute was started in Kabul. A year later, two girls' high schools were created and in 1947, a women's faculty of education was established. Furthermore steps were taken when:

> "In 1949 the first group of girls having the equivalent of a high school diploma began to teach in girls' schools" (Watkins, 1963, P.172).

According to Samady (2001), by 1950 there were 368 primary, secondary and vocational schools, and one teacher training school with a total of 95,300 students. The enrollment of children in primary education was 6% of the corresponding age (6 through 12) in an estimated population of 11 million people. In 1947, Kabul University was formally established. Three years later, the departments of theology, agriculture, and economics were founded.

In 1953, the king's cousin (also, brother-in-law) Prince Muhammad Daoud became Prime Minister. Quickly, the government's new policy took what Eastern and Western aid, milking both sides during the Cold War. UNICEF's senior officer, Dr. Navarro explains,

> "Kabul University was one of the premiere universities in the region" (Cho, 2003).

It was starting to advance during Prime Minister Daoud's administration, many more faculty departments were established. Some departments were affiliated with foreign universities in Germany, France, America, and the Soviet Union.

According to Samady (2001), in the 1950s efforts to expand education and improve its quality were started. In 1949, the Afghan government asked UNESCO to send a Mission to study its educational system. In 1954, USAID and Columbia University Teacher's College came to improve the qualitative improvement of teacher education in Afghanistan. In 1955, the Institute of Education was created and later integrated into Kabul University. Two years later, the Faculty of Economics was established and the Faculty of Pharmacy in 1959. In 1962, the Faculty of Education and the Institute of Industrial Management was founded.

In the 1950s, Afghanistan tried many times to strengthen its relations with the United States but was rejected by American presidents. This was mainly due to the US-Pakistani coalition. thus

Afghanistan turned to the Soviet Union for military assistance and later social, economics, and political assistance. From 1957 until 1974, the Soviets trained more than 60,000 skilled Afghan workers and 5,200 technicians. During this period, dozens of treaties and contracts were signed between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.

By the early 1970s, about 90% of the Afghan armed forces were being trained by the Soviets. With the arms and weapons arrived Soviet advisors and experts and what followed were thousands of Afghans going to the Soviet Union for military training. Graduates from Afghan institutes of higher education won fellowships to the USSR and Warsaw Pact nations, and there emerged a growing cadre of military officers, students, and technocrats with modern ideals and indoctrinated with socialist sympathies. Slowly but surely the stage for the Sovietization of Afghanistan was being laid as even Prime Minister Daoud earned the nickname of "Red Prince" by western diplomats.

At the time of Prime Minister Daoud's reign, three boarding high schools were also introduced in Kabul: Ibn Sina (later becoming Lycee), Khushal Khan Khattak Lycee, and Rahman Baba Lycee. Ibn Sina served as a teacher's training institution equipping rural students to return and become teachers in their villages. Khushal Khan Khattak Lycee and Rahman Baba Lycee enrolled students from the tribal areas. There were some of the programs to integrate various tribes into the government.

Efforts to expand the educational services are accounted by Wilber (1962):

> "In 1960 there were 175,600 pupils in 1,110 elementary schools of whom 19,000 were girls some 11,300 students, of whom 2,500 were girls, attended seventeen middle schools and eighteen secondary schools [The middle schools being grades seventh to ninth] there were thirty vocational schools with some 5,000 students, most of whom were young men some 193,000 students were enrolled in schools in Afghanistan and abroad, a figure double that of a decade [1950] earlier" (P. 85 & 87).

In 1963, Prime Minister Daoud was asked to step down by Zahir Shah. The king wanted to institute a constitutional monarchy and the presence of a powerful prime minister who was also a prince was something that would turn off the critics of the tribal monarchy from participation. Not surprisingly, in the late 1960's and early 1970's, debate was not restricted to only lecture halls, but the entire society was undergoing a transformational period. During this time scandalous cases of corruption also surfaced into the public debate circles. One relevant issue was the role of nepotism in the distribution of overseas scholarships and promotions. Kabul University was becoming a center for public discourse, social activism, and a check and balance on the government bureaucracy:

> "By 1968, the Afghan professors and other academic members developed 350 textbooks and teaching" (Samady, 2001, P. 61).

It was in the 1960's that new generation of educated Afghans entered the government bureaucracy. Further progress was realized in 1963 when the Faculty of Medicine at Nangahar University was founded in the city of Jalalabad in which Pashtu and English were the languages of instruction.

Still, international projects continued unhampered and with the assistance of the Soviet Union in 1967 the Polytechnic Institute was created. For the next decade, a number of university faculties were established with international support namely the universities in the USSR, France's universities in Lyon and Paris, German universities in Bonn, Bochum, Cologne and Leipzig, and American universities: Columbia University, Indiana University, University of Wyoming, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

However, political progress was coming to slow as the king and his establishment failed to ratify several important legislations drafted by the elected parliament. In 1973 while international aid declined and unemployment rose, the constitutional monarchy was abolished in a palace coup d'etat declaring former Prime Minister Mohammed Daoud as the country's President of the first republican government. The Soviets immediately recognized the first new republican government. In the field of education,

> "Special attention was given to the development of technical and vocational education including agricultural education" (Samady, 2001, P. 11).

Not only was the constitution of the government styled after that of the Soviet Union but also changes in academia started to resemble the Soviet approach to education.

According to Shorish (1998), in 1975 about 12,000 high school graduates competed for about 3,000 places at Kabul University. In 1977, the education infrastructure could not support the educational demands. It was not a case of education inflation; rather it was a result of faulty planning and structural inadequacies. In 1978, there were more than one million students in primary and secondary schools and other educational institutions in Afghanistan. There were 152,750 girls and 5,070 female teachers in primary schools. In an attempt to reduce pressure on both the education system and the labor market, the government instituted an examination, the Concord, at the end of the eighth grade:

> "Student enrollment in schools and other educational institutions in Afghanistan was over one million" (Samady, 2001, P.11).

The main purpose of the French-derived Concord was to weed out potentially successful university students from the rest of the student population.

In April 1978, President Muhammad Daoud was ousted and Nur Muhammad Taraki, head of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), ascended the presidency. Although the new government considered itself non-aligned, it was very much in alliance with the Soviet Union. The U.S. recognized the regime within a week and continued to send economic aid.

Being from the rural area, Taraki instituted Marxist style reforms, which emphasized literacy and educational opportunity expansion to farmers, rural dwellers, and women. According to Dobbs (1992), the April coup of 1978 caught the Kremlin by surprise and Moscow had even warned against the obstacles. Not considering the tensions between the modern systems and traditional systems, Taraki instituted drastic social and economic measures, including land reform, women's rights and education, thus continuing to offend those with vested interests in maintaining the status